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U.S. Attorney's Office
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FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS BARRIO AZTECA GANG MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that in El Paso this afternoon, a federal jury returned guilty verdicts on racketeering related charges against six leaders and associates of the Barrio Aztecas.

Following a month-long trial, the jury convicted Carlos "Shotgun" Perea, Manuel "Tolon" Cardoza, Benjamin "T-Top" Alvarez, Eugene "Gino" Mona, and Said "Shorty" Herrera of engaging in the affairs of an enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity also known as the federal Racketeering Influence Corrupt Organization (RICO) statute. As a result, each faces up to life in federal prison.

The jury also found:

- Defendants Perea, Cardoza, Alvarez, Mona and Herrera guilty of conspiracy to violate RICO statute;
- Defendant Herrera guilty of conspiracy to interfere with commerce by threats or violence;
- Defendants Perea, Cardoza and Alvarez guilty of conspiracy to launder monetary instruments;
- Defendants Perea, Cardoza, Alvarez and Herrera guilty of conspiracy to possess heroin, cocaine and marijuana with intent to distribute.

The jury also convicted Arturo "Tury" Enriquez of conspiracy to interfere with commerce by threats or violence but acquitted him of conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering. As a result of his conviction, Enriquez faces up to 20 years in federal prison.

Finally, the jury was unable reach a verdict on Count 10 which charged Herrera with conspiracy to commit violent crimes in aid of racketeering activity. Nine defendants pleaded guilty to various charges prior to trial.

Testimony during the trial revealed that the Barrio Azteca gang operated its criminal organization through its command structure, and the gang implemented and executed its criminal racketeering, drug trafficking, and money laundering activities in the El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, area. They promoted and protected their power and their operations through threats of force, intimidation, assaults, and murder. The Barrio Azteca through its command structure has perpetuated this "scheme" since its inception in 1986, and it continues to this day.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with vital assistance and cooperation from the El Paso County District Attorney's Office, as well as the United States Marshals Service, El Paso Police Department and Texas Department of Public Safety.

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